

# THE MINOR PROPHETS (Chronological Order)

## HABAKKUK

### LESSON NINE

#### Introduction:

1. Three prominent historical enemies of God and His people are addressed as being doomed by God through three of the Minor Prophets:
  - a. The Edomites (Obadiah)
  - b. The Assyrians ( Nahum)
  - c. The Chaldeans -Babylonians (Habakkuk)
    - (1). The Chaldeans were a distinguishable ethnic people who settled northwest of the Persian Gulf. Abraham journeyed from *“Ur of the Chaldees” (Genesis 11:31)*. In the ninth to seventh century B.C., they were under Assyrian rule. But when Babylon became a dominant power in this area between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, the Chaldeans became part of the people of Babylonia.
    - (2). Habakkuk speaks of these people comprising Babylon as *“that bitter and hasty nation...” (Habakkuk 1:6)*. When Jerusalem’s walls were breached in the days of Zedekiah, the “Chaldeans” were surrounding the city as part of Nebuchadnezzar’s army and killed Zedekiah’s sons before the conquered King’s eyes in Riblah, before putting out his eyes and taking him captive to Babylon (*2 Kings 25:4-7.*)

#### I. THE AUTHOR: (Habakkuk)

- A. “the prophet” (1:1, 3:1)
- B. “Habakkuk” means “Embrace”: Habakkuk may be looked upon as “embracing” God’s people in Jerusalem as they face the disciplinary judgment of God. Or, since he does not address God’s people in Jerusalem directly, but instead questions God, he is “embraced” by God offering difficult answers for Habakkuk but given by a merciful God.

#### II. DATE OF THE BOOK: 612-606 B.C.

- A. Assyria fell to Babylon in 612 B.C. – Babylon on the move in conquering nations.
- B. When Habakkuk received his oracle from God, the Chaldeans of Babylon had not yet conquered Jerusalem, but were on their way as God’s instrument in punishing His people for their sins.
  1. *“I heard, and my body trembled, my lips quivered at the voice; rottenness entereth into my bones, and I tremble in my place; because I must wait quietly for the day of trouble, for the coming of the people that invadeth us” (Habakkuk 3:16).*
- C. The oppression of Judah and the carrying away the first group of Jerusalem had not occurred yet (605 B.C.)

**III. UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BOOK:**

- A. A "Colloquy" (between Habakkuk and God) (Chapters 1-2)
  - 1. Habakkuk questions God in not acting to punish sin – He will punish sin – when sin becomes full in any people and nation; When he learns that the Chaldeans will punish Judah for their sins, Habakkuk questions God using a nation more sinful than Judah to be that instrument of punishment.
  - 2. God's two answers:
    - a. "the righteous (just) shall live by their faith" (Habakkuk 2:4)
    - b. "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah" (Habakkuk 2:14).
- B. A "Prayer" and "Song" (Chapter 3)
  - 1. Plea for God to remember mercy in His wrath (3:2).
  - 2. God comes with vivid power to earth for the purpose of the salvation of His people (3:13).
  - 3. Experiencing the difficulty ahead, prophet will "rejoice in Jehovah (3:17-19).

**IV. MOVEMENT OF THE BOOK:** The Book starts with a "sigh" and ends with a "song."

- A. Chapter 1 – A "Burden"
- B. Chapter 2- A "Vision"
- C. Chapter 3- A "Prayer" and "Song"

**V. LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE BOOK:**

- A. God rules over all the nations in His moral world – God will punish the wicked in His time – Sin does not go unpunished.
- B. "Evil is self-destructive"
- C. "Faithfulness is the guarantee of permanence."
- D. "Suffering is disciplinary."

**VI. OUTLINE OF THE BOOK**

- I. **God's judgment upon Judah, the wicked people of God, through the Chaldeans (1:2-2:3).**
  - A. First perplexity: "How can Jehovah justify his indifference in the presence of wickedness and violence?" (1: 2-4)
  - B. Jehovah's reply: He is not indifferent...He is raising up the Chaldeans to execute His judgment (1: 5-11).

- C. Second perplexity: *“How can a Holy God use an impure and godless agent?” (1:12-17)*
- D. Jehovah’s reply: *“The judgment is sure, but not immediate.” (2:1-3)*

**II. God’s judgment upon the Chaldeans, the ungodly world power (2:4-20)**

- A. Fundamentals: (2:4-5)
  - 1. The righteous – live by faith (v.4)
  - 2. The wicked – drunken on pride, power and greed will not continue (v.5)
- B. *“Woes”* upon the Chaldeans: a taunt song (v. 6-20)

**III. Prayer for compassion in the midst of judgement (Chapter 3)**

- A. Petition (v.1-2) – plead for mercy in the face of God’s wrath
- B. The mighty works of Jehovah in the past – judgment and salvation (v. 3-15)
- C. Implicit confidence in Jehovah, the God of salvation (v. 16-19)

**QUESTIONS:**

1. Why is Habakkuk’s prophecy a “burden?”
2. What did Habakkuk see among God’s own people?
3. What problem did Habakkuk have with God?
4. What reply did Jehovah give to Habakkuk in answering the problem proposed by Habakkuk?
5. What was Habakkuk’s second problem on the heels of God’s first reply?

6. How does God respond to Habakkuk's second perplexity with God?
  
7. How does Habakkuk 2:4 offer us the theme of this Book:  
Is this also the theme of a New Testament Book?
  
8. The "five woes" of Habakkuk 2:6-20 apply to whom?
  
9. What specific supplication does Habakkuk ask God for in prayer?  
Why was this an important supplication to Habakkuk?
  
10. What does Habakkuk remember in 3:13-15?
  
11. How does the hymn found in 3:17-19 depict one who has learned that "righteous shall live by his faith?"